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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC



II. ASIA-AFRICA

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OK
Thailand - North Vietnam: Thai and North Vietnamese Red Cross representatives have reached agreement in Rangoon on the repatriation of some of the 40,000 to 50,000 Vietnamese refugees in northeast Thailand. Implementation will require the presence for an extended period of a North Vietnamese Red Cross mission in Bangkok. The Thai Government's willingness to accept such a mission underscores its concern to effect a solution to the internal security problem posed by the refugees' presence in the frontier provinces adjoining Laos. Despite the mission's administrative nature, Hanoi probably will attempt to magnify its importance in accordance with North Vietnam's policy of increasing contacts with nonbloc nations.

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Thai and North Vietnamese Red Cross Representatives Agree
On Refugee Repatriation

Thai and North Vietnamese Red Cross representatives who have been negotiating in Rangoon since late June have signed an agreement providing for repatriation, beginning in January 1960, of those Vietnamese refugees in northeast Thailand who wish to go to North Vietnam. Transportation will be by ship, and the costs reportedly will be shared by Thailand and North Vietnam. It is not yet clear how many of the 40,000 to 50,000 refugees will actually accept repatriation; an estimated 90 percent of them favor North Vietnam.

The repatriation agreement provides for the dispatch of two North Vietnamese Red Cross "advisers" to Bangkok to "assist" the Thai Red Cross in the execution of the accord. Thailand chose such wording to emphasize the nongovernmental nature of the agreement and of the bodies responsible for its implementation, but the acceptance of even unofficial Hanoi representatives underscored Bangkok's anxiety to rid itself of an unwanted minority group which it sees as a serious internal security threat in Thailand's strategic frontier provinces adjoining Laos.

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[North Vietnam is reported to have been "slightly taken aback" by claims that the majority of the refugees would choose to be repatriated to the north.] Hanoi is, however, publicly committed to taking back all who wish to return and probably feels the propaganda potential of such a majority choice may compensate for loss of a possible fifth column.

Despite the administrative nature of the proposed mission in Bangkok, Hanoi will probably attempt to magnify its importance in accordance with North Vietnam's policy of increasing contacts with nonbloc nations. The Communists may also seek to retard implementation of the repatriation agreement in an effort to prolong the mission's stay in Thailand.

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